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THE EXCELLENCE OF THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND;

694.g.1.
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A SERMON

AT THE CHURCH OF

ST. MARY LE BOW

On ST. MARK's DAY, 1778,

PURSUANT TO THE WILL OF

MR. JOHN HUTCHIN, CITIZEN OF LONDON.

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED

AN ACCOUNT OF A CATECHETIC LECTURE

REVIVED IN THAT CHURCH.

BY EAST APTHORP, D.D.

VICAR OF CROYDON,

AND

RECTOR OF ST. MARY LE BOW.

K

ST. CLEMENT. ad Corinth. I. 41.

Ἕκαστος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοὶ, ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ τάγματι εὐχαριστείτω Θεῷ, ἐν ἀγαθῇ συνειδήσει ὑπάρχων, μὴ παρεκβαίνων τὸν ὡρισμένον τῆς Λειτουργίας αὐτοῦ κανόνα, ἐν σεμνότητι.

LONDON

PRINTED FOR J. ROBSON, BOND-STREET.

MDCCLXXVIII.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Sermon is made public, as a suitable method of announcing the perpetual establishment of the Lecture mentioned in the title-page. It was thought proper to fix the plan of that useful institution, by publishing the several particulars agreed on, respecting the endowment, the election, subjects, and times appointed, for reading a Course of Lectures in the parish church of St. Mary Le Bow, *on the Catechism of the Church of* England, *on Confirmation, and the Evidence of Christianity.*

This little publication is intended to promote the interests of Piety, Faith, and Virtue, in the Author's own department: and

HE DEDICATES IT,

WITH THE SINCEREST GRATITUDE, ESTEEM, AND ATTACHMENT,

TO HIS RESPECTED FRIENDS,

THE INHABITANTS OF THE UNITED PARISHES OF

ST. MARY LE BOW, ST. PANCRAS, AND ALLHALLOWS LONDON.

THE EXCELLENCE OF THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

PSALM XCV.

6. *O come, let us worship and bow down:*
Let us kneel before the LORD *our maker.*

IN the Epistle to the Hebrews, iv. 7, this Psalm is ascribed to David: and, as well by the fine application of it, in that Epistle, to the moral devotion of Christians, as by the scope and doctrine of the psalm itself, it appears to have been intended as a solemn invitation to celebrate the praises of God in his public worship. In this view, it is, with great propriety, introductory to the daily morning service of our own church.

The peculiar application of this Psalm to the devotions of the Sabbath and the public worship, is apparent from the scope and subject of it. For it animates us to the great duties of Praise, ver. 1—5. and Prayer, ver. 6, 7. of Hearing God's word, and Obeying it without delay or hardness of heart, ver. 8—10, by the hopes of entering into His Eternal reſt, ver. 11. Compare Hebr. iii. 7—iv. 11. where the Apostle, by a beautiful analogy, exhorts the Jewish converts not to come short of the heavenly rest, which was typified to their ancestors by an earthly Canaan. "Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

God's absolute dominion over all Nature is founded on the right of Creation:

In His hand are the deep places of the Earth.
The strength of the hills is His also:
The Sea is His, and he made it,
And His hands formed the dry land.

As the Sabbath was primarily instituted, to perpetuate the memory of the Creation, we ought on that day, to meditate on the Power and Wisdom of God, so conspicuous in the natural world; and from thence, exalt our thoughts to contemplate his Juſtice and Mercy displayed in his New Creation, the Redemption of Man. In both respects, our peculiar dependence on God as His people, and the sheep of His pasture, infers our indispensable obligation to worship Him; and that, not only with prayers and praises, but with the still more acceptable devotion of an holy and a christian life.

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Having said thus much by way of introduction, I proceed to Consider the Usefulness of Prescribed Forms of Prayer in Public Worship—The Origin and Excellence of our English Liturgy.

* Prayer is an exalted intercourse between GOD and Man, wherein we acknowledge our own dependence for all spiritual and temporal blessings, and our grateful sense of the divine mercies bestowed on us through JESUS CHRIST. In this high converse with GOD, the mind and understanding ſhould be collected, fixed, and attentive; the Soul ſhould be purified from sense and passion; the Imagination, refined and elevated; the Heart, humble and submissive, serene and placable; and all our intellectual powers, enlightened by contemplation, stedfast in Faith, joyful through Hope, inflamed with sacred Love. Under the sense of a present Deity, hearing and accepting our prayers and praises; the storms of passion subside, the world recedes, the Soul asserts its divine original, and in some sort assimilates itself to the Father of Spirits †.

* Some paragraphs are here copied from a Sermon "On the Constitution of a Christian Church," printed in the year 1761.

† Nihil sumus aliud Christiani, nisi, magistro Christo, summi Regis ac Principis veneratores . . huic omnes ex more prosternimur, hunc collatis precibus adoramus, ab hoc justa et honesta et auditu ejus condigna deposcimus: non quo ipse desideret supplices nos esse, aut amet substerni tot millium venerationem videre. Utilitas hæc nostra est, et commodi nostri rationem spectans. ARNOBIUS. Lib. I. p. 24, 25.

O maxime, O summe rerum invisibilium procreator! O ipse invise, et nullis unquam comprehense naturis! dignus, dignus es vere (si modo Te dignum mortali dicendum est ore) cui spirans omnis intelligensque natura et habere et agere nunquam desinat gratias; cui totâ conveniat vitâ genu nixo procumbere, et continuatis precibus supplicare. ibid. p. 28.

Hence we may collect how indispensable in the life of a Christian is the duty of Prayer, whether PUBLIC, private, or domestic. The right dispositions of the worshipper being pre-supposed, it hath been in the last age more than in the present or any preceding times, a subject of disquisition, whether the religious affections of the heart are more fitly expressed in spontaneous and unpremeditated language, or in a prescribed form. It may perhaps be deemed a great concession, to observe that Forms are founded on the weakness of the human mind; while an Extempore address to the majesty of Heaven requires no ordinary capacity *. But it is on this ground, as well as on the most respectable precedents, that I would give the preference to a Liturgy or Form of Prayer in the celebration of Public Worship.

Not to insist on the several precedents of written prayers and psalms recorded in Scripture, many of which were

* Our great Poet ascribes to our First Parents in a state of *innocence*, and in the *integrity* of their intellectual and moral powers, those exalted strains of unpremeditated devotion, which he introduces with this sweet prelude:

Lowly they bow'd adoring, and began
Their orisons, each morning duly paid
In various style; for neither various style,
Nor holy rapture, wanted they to praise
Their Maker, in fit strains pronounc'd or sung
Unmeditated; such prompt eloquence
Flow'd from their lips, in prose or numerous verse.

MILTON. P. L. Book v. 144.

His learned Commentator observes, that Milton in this very place where he condemns liturgic forms, borrows the ideas of his Morning Hymn from the book of Psalms.

expressly composed for the solemnities of Public Devotion: the Jewish Church in our Blessed Saviour's time had stated forms in the divine service, both of the Temple and Synagogues. Those Forms are still extant; and our Lord and His Apostles were so far from disapproving of them, that they constantly frequented the divine service then in use *. The first Christian converts continued to unite with the Jews in the time, the place, and form of Public Worship: an example of admirable Moderation, and an authentic testimony of the lawfulness, use, and authority of a prescribed Liturgy. I shall not enter on an enquiry into Ancient Offices, whether any were written by the Apostles

* Luke iv. 16. 20. Acts ii. 46. iii. 1. Of the stated forms of the Temple and Synagogues, see Lewis, Origines Hebr. III. 22. Buddeus, Eccl. Apost. p. 816. Wolfius, Biblioth. Hebr. II. 1334. 1452.

Of Ecclesiastical Books and Liturgies, see LETTERS on the prevalence of Christianity, p. 142. The Oldest Liturgy now remaining, is that which is preserved in the Apostolical Constitutions, Book VII. 24—49. VIII. 5—22. But those Constitutions, however curious as a Collection of ancient usages, are of no authority; being only (as Bp. Warburton has somewhere observed with his usual sagacity) an absurd attempt to supply a supposed defect in the Christian Religion, by giving it a Ritual, that it might not appear in this respect inferior to the Mosaic Revelation.

St. CYRIL, in his 5th mystagogic catechesis, explains the Liturgy of the Church of Jerusalem, which was quite different from the Liturgy now extant, ascribed to St. James. That Liturgy, and those attributed to our Lord and Saviour, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to St. Peter, St. Matthew, St. John, St. Mark, are all confessedly spurious. The Liturgies ascribed to St. Basil and St. Chrysostome, are so interpolated, that it is impossible to distinguish what parts of them are the work of those eloquent Fathers. Of these, and of the Eastern Liturgies in Renaudot's Collection, see Buddeus, in Isag. p. 758.

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Apostles and Apostolic men, to whom some productions of a later age have been confidently ascribed; but the expediency of offering our public prayers in pre-composed words, will perhaps appear from the following Observations.

A pre-compoſed form assists and regulates devotion, as it supplies the mind with clear ideas and apt expressions; both which should ever accompany this great duty; it being requisite to pray with a right understanding, as well as with a fervent spirit. The style and method of our prayers being deliberately prepared: the Reason is informed, and the Heart composed to a train of devout affections, ascending in just gradation through the various parts of prayer, supplications, petitions, intercessions, and giving of thanks.

A judicious form of prayer prevents impropriety and indecorum; which, highly unbecoming so reasonable and so exalted a service as Religion, is most incongruous when we address ourselves to the Majesty of Heaven. When men approach the throne of an earthly monarch, they are cautious and exact in arranging their ideas, selecting their expressions, and embellishing their address with a dignity of style be-

and Brett's Collection, where many of them are translated into Engliſh: so that every one may compare them with the Book of Common Prayer, whose excellence above all other public forms will best appear by such comparison. It is not perfect, but it is the best. Liturgies were probably not committed to writing, at least not made public, till the Fifth Century. It was a part of the 'disciplina arcani,' to conceal the Christian worship from the heathens, and the Communion-service from the catechumens. See Brett's dissert. §. 3. and the Constitt. VIII. 12.

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coming that of the Prince. In the case of Prayer, as well as of Sacrifice, the prophet's criterion is strictly applicable. *Offer it now unto thy governour; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? should I accept this of your hands? for I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts.* Mal. i. 8. 13. 14. Therefore, whether in the pious expressions of unpremeditated devotion, or in the more elaborate exactness of composition; whatever is most accurate in Reason, most august in Imagination, most sublime in Eloquence, should be humbly offered in adoration to the giver of these and of all good gifts.

But a principal use of a judicious form of public Prayer, is to include in our most solemn devotions the essentials of Christian Faith and Duty: which is the most effectual method of impressing them on the understanding and conscience, and of securing the sincerity of our profession *. The doctrines and duties of the Gospel are so interwoven, by significant and proper definitions, throughout our Liturgy, that the most illiterate, if they are pious and attentive, may learn from their prayers the principles of our common salvation. Its use is no less important, as a guard and preservative against heretical opinions. Most of the depraved doctrines that have corrupted and deformed the purity and beauty of Religion, are so explicitly condemned in

* 'Publick forms of Prayer are great advantages to convey an article 'of Faith into the most secret retirement of the spirit, and to establish it 'with a most firm persuasion, and indear it to us with the greatest affec-'tion.' Bp. TAYLOR, Apology for Liturgy, § 107, who gives many more reasons for authorized and set forms.

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our established Liturgy; that it is scarce possible for a disciple of Arius, of Pelagius, of Socinus, or any other hæresiarch, to shelter himself under the Communion of a National Church, which so openly condemns their dangerous errors. To the stability of our public Forms we are perhaps indebted, for that remarkable freedom from False Religion, which hath ever distinguished the Reformed Church of England: the evangelic purity of her Faith and Morals having never been generally sullied by Superstition, Heresy, Enthusiasm, or Licentiousness.

That our National Liturgy; though composed on ancient models, and in the eclectic spirit of our Reformers, selecting what was Best from All; in which the wisdom of Cranmer, the eloquence of Ridley, the heroic piety of Martyrs and confessors, and the temperate criticism of its subsequent Reviewers, all combined to produce a most accurate form of Public Prayer: that it should still be subject to some exceptions, is a necessary imperfection, inseparable from the happiest efforts of human reason. Although it may be demonstrated, that the present Liturgy is truly evangelical in its principles; much more so, than any of the attempts, which have hitherto been made, to subſtitute others in its place: yet every ſincere Christian would delight in having the pure Word of God read in Churches, and accessible to all men, in a most exact and perspicuous Translation; and a Liturgy as perfect as human wisdom and piety can make it. To attain to perfection in works of this kind, is not indeed practicable: but it is possible to approximate very near to it, by diminishing the blemishes, and improving the excellencies of our present Forms,

Forms, without in the least affecting the essential principles on which they are established.

For instance: in revising our English version of the Bible, some blemishes are so manifest to the learned, that all would agree to expunge or alter them. Such amendments (many of which are dispersed throughout the writings of our best Divines) would make the Bible appear, what it really is, the most rational and beautiful Book in the world. Not only its truth, but even its elegance, should he consulted, by the substitution of apt and noble expressions for such as are obsolete or mean or improper; of literal exactness, instead of periphrasis and supplement: by a proper distinction of prose and verse; by accurate summaries, and an exact analysis, *rightly dividing the word of Truth.*

To make an easy transition to the farther improvement of our admirable Liturgy; in the public reading of the sacred Books, perhaps too great a part of the canonical Scriptures is omitted, too much of the apocryphal is read to little edification. Perhaps our Sunday-lessons are not always selected with the requisite care and judgment: those lessons might contain less of history and of local or temporary passages, and more of doctrines interesting to Christians, of instructive morals, exalted praises, and demonstrative predictions relating to the person and church of CHRIST.

Such improvements might be undertaken with safety and success, were men's hearts and tempers influenced only by the principles and spirit of the gospel. But when plausible pretenses of reformation would affect the purest and

most essential doctrines; we must revere and applaud the wise and cautious conduct of our Church-governours, who by their exemplary moderation, as well as their stedfast support of true Christianity, are the fittest as well as the only authorized judges of suitable amendments in our Established Church.

Such in general are my sentiments on a subject of frequent and popular discussion: yet these and the like improvements are by no means essential to the interests of VIRTUE and PIETY; both which may be advanced to their highest elevation, in the conscientious use of our present forms of Common-Prayer and Subscription.

The weight and number of those objections, which have at any time been made to the established Liturgy, will be considerably diminished by a candid attention to the following reflections.

All the exceptions to a public ritual of such extent, have a formidable appearance, when collected together, and presented to the prejudiced eye in one view.

Few objections, and those of lest moment, are applicable to the devotions, and to the constant daily service.

The true solution of particular exceptions is the general excellence and utility of the Liturgy. The moral and devout affections, kindled and cherished by its serious and frequent use, is the proper test of its excellence and benefit to religious and devout worshippers. For such, and such only, as have a taste for Devotion and delight in divine worship, are competent critics on this subject. To their judgment I mean to appeal in farther illustrating the moral and devotional excellencies of our English Liturgy.

It might be commended, among its more important excellencies, for the eloquence of the composition and purity of style. In an age when polite letters were just emerging from barbarism; before the English nation could boast of any thing in prose, written with tolerable expression: the Liturgy, by its unrivalled and majestic simplicity, led the way to the refinement of our style and language; which has been in a manner fixed ever since, by the purity of diction in the Common-prayer and translation of the Bible. This is the more observable, as the compilers of the first English Liturgy had no models before them, but the Latin Breviaries of barbarous ages, in monastic rhythm. The first outline of this noble work is still to be discerned in the Litany and other prayers, published by authority of king Henry VIII. in 1535.

In 1544, the king studied to settle matters of Religion with his usual duplicity, so that both parties might have some content. 'But he did an act,' says our best Church historian*, which wonderfully pleased the whole protestant party: which was, the translating the prayers for the processions and litanies into the English tongue. This was sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury (CRANMER, whose work it was,) with an order, that it should be used over all his province.' 'As these prayers were now set out in English, the protestants doubted not, but there being the same reason to put all the other offices in the vulgar tongue, they would prevail for that too †.'

* BURNET. H. R. Book III. 1544. Records. No. 28.

† COLLIER. E. H. vol. II. p. 111. 206.

The two Liturgies of Edward VI. in 1548 and 1551, with considerable variations from each other, approached nearly in essentials, especially the latter, to the present form. 'This Liturgy,' says the historian, 'was drawn up with that judgment and temper, that it was hard to find a sensible objection against it *.'

The Articles of Religion were added in 1552; and that noble work, The Reformation of the Ecclesiastical Laws, in fifty-one titles, on the model of Justinian's pandects, was finished before the death of Edward VI. whose short reign gives the most exalted idea of his virtue and capacity, which, aided by the wisdom and piety of Cranmer, revived the lustre of the primitive Church in the purity of the English Reformation.

The Liturgy was repealed in the sanguinary reign of Mary. Only the Church of Francfort, made up of the English exiles, in 1555, combined a form of prayer from our own and the Geneva service. A dissention arising, John Knox compiled a new Liturgy, and seceded to Geneva. Hence, the origin of non-conformity; which did not then proceed to such an extreme, as to reject all Liturgies: Forms of Prayer were then used in all the reformed churches; nor was any thing of moment objected to the English Liturgy, but its resemblance to the Latin Offices †.

* For a full account of this Liturgy, see Bp. BURNET, H. R. Ann. 1548. p. 61—80. 155. COLLIER. E. H. p. 252—269, and Records, No. 59.

† NEAL, Ann. 1556. COLLIER, p. 393—396.

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The Reformed Religion, and the second Liturgy of king Edward VI. were restored at the accession of Queen Elizabeth, in 1558, and continued through that glorious reign with few variations †.

The reasonableness, antiquity, and decency of the public service, was asserted by the immortal Hooker in the 5th book of his Ecclesiastical Polity, who inspirits every topic with the united strength of eloquence and argument, warmed with his exalted piety, charity, and moderation. 'No doubt,' says that great man, 'from God it hath proceeded, and by us it must be acknowledged a work of singular care and providence, that the Church hath evermore held a prescript form of Common-Prayer, although not in all things every where the same, yet for the most part retaining still the same analogy:' and, 'so much of our lives is cœlestial and divine, as we spend in the exercise of prayer.' §. 25.

In the first year of king James I. after the conference at Hampton-Court, the Liturgy was reviewed, some thanksgivings were added at the end of the Litany: and the Catechism was enlarged with the doctrine of the Sacraments ‡; its outline having been drawn long before, in King Henry's book 'of the Institution of a Christian man,' published in 1537, and 1543 *.

† Burnet. Collier. ad ann. 1559.

‡ Wheatley, p. 29. Collier, p. 671—684.

* Collier, p. 139. 188.

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The parliament, in 1641, passed a bill for the abolition of Episcopacy and the disuse of the Common-Prayer *.

It was restored and reviewed in 1661, after the conference at the Savoy, when several lessons were changed, some collects altered, and the judicious prayers for the Ember weeks, for all conditions of men, and the very beautiful general thanksgiving, were added †.

Before I finish this slight history of the Liturgy, it will not be improper to take notice of the abortive attempt to give it its last polish and perfection under the auspices of king William in 1689, by the incomparable Archbishop Tillotson, and our other great divines of that memorable æra: an attempt, which, though then defeated by a violent high-church faction, will probably be the model of any future review ‡.

Thus, 'it hath been the wisdom of the Church of Eng-'land, ever since the first compiling of her publick Li-'turgy, to keep the mean between the two extremes, of 'too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness 'in admitting, any variation from it ||.'

But in order to evince the excellence of the present Liturgy, and to recommend a devout, attentive, frequent, and

* Collier, p. 835.

† Collier, p. 876—886. Nichols, Defence, p. 74.

‡ Bp. Burnet, Hist. of his O. T. 1689. p. 41. Buddeus, de Theolog. Symbolica. p. 452. seqq. Nichols's Defence of the Church of England, p. 110—116, who observes, that 'no misfortune so sensibly afflicted the Church, as this dissention between the Clergy.'

§ Birch's Life of Abp. Tillotson, p. 193.

|| See the judicious Preface, first prefixed to the C. P. in 1661.

rational use of it; it may be of some benefit, to give a short analysis of its method and principal parts. We of the Clergy should read it in the same spirit with which it is written, with accuracy and attention; with a proper degree of life, and warmth, and energy; yet soberly and composedly; in one word, devoutly. The composition itself, equally reasonable and affecting, excites those mixt emotions, which St. Paul approves, when he injoins us to pray with the spirit and with the understanding also. With these dispositions, the minister and people should accompany each other, so as to make the whole public worship a devout and reasonable service; so as to bring home the duties of religion and fervour of devotion to men's hearts and bosoms.

Thus; to take an orderly, though cursory view of our liturgic service; the sentences of Scripture excite us to repentance and solid amendment. The confession of sin should terminate in the great design of the Christian Religion, a sober, righteous, and godly life. The Lord's Prayer (which, admirable and divine as it is, is perhaps repeated rather too often) should engage our profound attention, as an act of praise and resignation, of dependance on God, of charity to man, of resolution in an holy life. The Psalms are full of instruction and exalted piety; replete with all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: and we should do well, to study them at home (as well as the other Scriptures, especially the New Testament) with some good paraphrase or commentary, that we may repeat them rationally and critically, as well as piously. Considering the Psalms in their clear and evident reference to

CHRIST,

CHRIST, it is scarce possible to resist the demonstration that results from them, of the truth of the Christian religion. The Lessons also should be studied, and heard with composed attention, as the immediate word of God.

The Te Deum, a noble hymn, of an uncertain age and author, ſhould be repeated with an elevation of mind, suited to the sublimity of the thoughts and praises. In the prayers and collects, let our attention be fixed on the leading subject of each: whether for peace, or grace, or protection, or ſome special virtue; let that virtue, that petition, be the immediate subject of our ardent aspirations: and if our hearts are thus warmly interested in our devotions, the true answer to our prayers will be our improvement in those christian qualities and virtues.

For this end, consider the Litany as a systematical and elaborate address to the throne of Heaven; to express the essential principles of our faith; to obtain the pardon of our past sins, and the grace of true repentance; to keep us from all natural and moral evil; to acknowledge the mystery of godliness, in the incarnation and cross and triumphs of CHRIST; by various intercessions, to express our loyalty, our public spirit, and our fervent charity for all mankind. The essence of our devotion is the Christian temper, and the exercise of these exalted virtues. Thus we conclude the first part of our divine service, with, the great design of Christianity, the 'giving up ourselves to the service of God in a daily course of holiness and righteousness.' Thus, we pray that we may attain to the 'knowledge of His truth and everlasting life.'

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The Communion-service is equally instructive and devout. Let every one labour to understand the Commandments, in their exalted and christian sense, as interpreted by CHRIST himself. Let it be an essential part of our devotion, to resolve to observe them in the love of God and man. Such a resolution would have admirable effects: it would lead us to entertain worthy notions of the being and spiritual nature of God, and deter us from the prevailing impiety of profaning His name and sabbaths. The second table teaches us the parental, filial, civil and ecclesiastical duties; the reverence that is due to the life, the chastity, the property, and good-name of our fellow-chrittians; and the excellence of a mind, free from concupiscence and lust, from envy, covetousness, and discontent. How earnestly should we pray, that God would pardon our frequent violations of His laws! and write them henceforth on the tables of our hearts!

The Epistles and Gospels are so disposed, as to contain a methodical view of the history, the evidence, doctrines, and morals of the Christian Religion.

The three Creeds, defining the attributes of the ETERNAL TRINITY, should be repeated with the clearest and most unequivocal sincerity, as acts of faith and tests of church-communion.

The Eucharist is a commemoration of the sacrifice of CHRIST, and an offering of ourselves to HIS service. Agreable to this idea, the sacramental devotions are composed with a special regard to the sacrifice and satisfaction of CHRIST's death; and with a constant view to the main end of His Religion, the morals of the worshipper. This

will best appear, from a short analysis of the Communion-service. The Commandments fix our attention on religious and moral duties. The Creeds express our faith. The Sentences of holy scripture excite us to sincerity, justice, compassion and liberality. The Exhortations point out the previous dispositions of all who worthily communicate: and include an exact theory of the Eucharist, considered as a commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ's death; as a foederal rite wherein we feast on that sacrifice, and feed on the banquet of that most heavenly food'; and as an act of love to God and man. With the moral dispositions indispensably requisite, we are invited to this holy action by a previous Confession, which must affect every one's conscience; and a conditional or precatory Absolution, on the terms of hearty repentance and true faith. This is followed by the most consolatory declarations of Holy Scripture, and by that noble and very ancient formulary, the 'Sursum Corda'; with occasional professions of faith in the great mysteries of our redemption. What can be more becoming, than to descend from these elevated praises to the thoughts of our own demerit! and to pray, that our souls and bodies may be cleansed by the cross and passion of CHRIST! The prayer of Consecration commemorates the institution in the original form of scripture-expression. After severally receiving the sacred emblems, we, with much solemnity, renew our moral and religious purposes, by 'presenting ourselves, our souls, and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice'; which is the true design of the Christian Religion, the consecrating ourselves to GOD, in the obedience of CHRIST, through the SPIRIT.

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From this short view of the method of our Communion-service, we must discern, how remote this whole institution, and our manner of solemnizing it, is from countenancing the least degree of superstition. Every part of it depends, for its efficacy with God, on the religious sincerity and virtuous dispositions of the worshipper: and all the benefits proposed by it, are so expressed, as to have no connection with the 'opus operatum', but to be merely conditional; sealing, only to true penitents and believers, of charitable hearts, and good purposes, and improving virtue, the pardon of sin, and the assurance of the favour and goodness of God, through the mediation of that Saviour, whose atonement we thankfully commemorate.

It would be an undertaking of too great extent for this time and place, should I attempt to analyze the occasional services, and to point out their respective excellencies. But there is one of these liturgic and symbolical compositions, of so general use and approved merit, that it deserves to be specified as an instance of the maternal care of the church of England in training up her children in the ways of religion. I mean THE CATECHISM, which deserves the proper encomium of such instructions, for its simplicity, method, brevity, and precision. I could dwell with complacency on this topic, more especially in the view of congratulating this respectable parish, on the recent foundation, or rather the revival, of a perpetual catechetic lecture, for the purpose of explaining and illustrating the Christian Religion, in the order and method of this catechism; so as to form a regular and intire system, including the fundamental principles and doctrines—Of the Covenants between God

and man.—Of the Christian Faith—and Ethics.—Of Prayer and Sacraments: with discourses on Confirmation, and the collective evidence of Christianity. Such an outline, diligently filled up by able hands; such as may be elected from among the learned and exemplary clergy of this metropolis; would tend, by the divine blessing, in a course of years to diffuse over all its parishes, and among the body of the people, such principles of pure religion and virtue, as may check and prevent the spirit of infidelity and vice; and even contribute to the safety, welfare and stability of the public, as well as to the eternal salvation of many individuals.

In this pleasing and animating hope of the success of this enterprize, by your pious zeal and unanimity, I shall close these well-meant reflections; with my earnest prayer, 'that God will enable me to perform such duties in my pastoral relation to you, as are requisite to the decency, order, and edification of your public service; and that I may be the honoured instrument in that Almighty hand whose strength is perfected in weakness, of leading many to righteousness and salvation.' With this end ever in view; and in subservience to the inspired rule of the New Testament, and to the divine spirit of the Christian Religion: it shall be my endeavour to attain to an accurate conformity to the principles, laws, and institutions of the Church of England; not presuming to infringe or alter those decent ordinances and wise injunctions, which it is my office and duty to obey. And this obedience is no less a happiness, than a duty; conscientiously persuaded as I am, that the principles and doctrines of the church of England,

England, are in all things essential the doctrines of Holy Scripture: and its Liturgy so rational, so touching, so eloquent, so pious, devout, and scriptural; that, when we use it aright, with fervour and attention, 'lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting,' we then, indeed, '*Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name*, and '*Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.*' Psalm xxix. 2.*

* See an eloquent and well-reasoned Sermon on this text, on the Liturgy of the Church of England, preached at the Church of St. *Mary Le Bow* on St. Mark's day, 1763, by JOHN BUTLER, L.L.D. now Lord Bishop of Oxford.

THE END.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

THE following sums were given by will for the maintenance of a weekly Lecture in the Parish-Church of *St. Mary Le Bow**.

		£.
In 1610	Mr. *George Palyn* gave	100
1612,	Mrs. *Stone*,	10
1623,	Mr. *William Banton's* legacy,	50
1627,	Mr. *Gabriel Cumberland*,	10
1632,	Mrs. *Sarah Cox*,	40
		210

In 1622, The lecture was begun.

In 1624, the parish expended 301 l. 17 s. in the purchase of two tenements in *Abchurch-Lane*, London; the rents whereof were to be employed towards the maintenance of the Lecture.

The estate now consists of a piece of ground in *Abchurch-Lane*, and of certain undivided parts or shares of the tenement called Lloyd's Coffee-house, and of ano-

* Stow's Survey of London, Book III. p. 23. edit. 1720.

ther adjoining messuage; and is held by lease from the parish for 34 years from Michaelmas day, O. S. 1758, at the clear yearly rent of 40l.

By a codicil to the last will and testament of George Palyn, citizen of London, one hundred pounds was bequeathed, in 1610, "towards the maintenance and continuance of a Lecture or Sermon to be read and preached "weekly for ever, in the parish church of St. Mary le "Bow, on the Sabbath-day in the afternoon, in the "manner of catechizing, for the good instruction of the "youth of the said parish in the principles and rudiments "of the religion established in this kingdom: and the "preacher shall chiefly apply himself in the expounding of "the Lord's Prayer, the Articles of our Belief, the Ten "Commandments, and the Blessed Sacraments of Baptism "and the Lord's Supper, and other necessary points of "Religion."

St. *Mary Le Bow*, London.—At a Vestry held May 18, and, by adjournment, May 29, 1778, the following regulations were unanimously agreed to.

A plan proposed by the Reverend Dr. *Apthorp*, the rector of this parish, respecting the lecture founded to be preached in this church, was read to the vestry; and after consideration thereof, and some alterations made therein, the following propositions were severally approved of.

A motion was made and seconded, that all proceedings in the suit in chancery respecting the lecture, be stayed; and that the matter of the Lecture, and every thing relating

lating thereto, be settled by the consent and agreement of the rector and the parishioners.

That the thanks of this vestry be given to the Rev. Dr. *Apthorp*, for the declaration made by him of his inclination and desire to stop all proceedings in the suit commenced, respecting the Lecture, and of his intention to meet the wishes of the parishioners in this business.

Ordered, I. That a course of lectures on the catechism of the Church of England, be read in such a method, as to form a A REGULAR SYSTEM OF CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION, according to the doctrine of the Church of England; to be compleated in forty-eight lectures in two years.

II. That the lecture be preached on the first and third Sundays in every month, at six o'clock in the evening, after the reading of the evening prayers.

III. That the clear produce of the estate in *Abchurch-Lane* be applied annually for the support of this lecture.

IV. That the subjects of this lecture be invariably, THE DOCTRINE OF THE COVENANTS OF GOD WITH MAN: ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE THREE CREEDS; OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS; OF THE LORD'S PRAYER; AND THE SACRAMENTS OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER. To which the lecturer may at his discretion add his THOUGHTS ON CONFIRMATION, and A VIEW OF THE COLLECTIVE EVIDENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

V. That

V. That the lecturer first elected ſhall proceed on his course of lectures on Sunday the fourth day of October next, at ſix o'clock in the evening.

VI. That after the first election, all elections in future ſhall be had six months before the commencement of the course of lectures to be proceeded upon.

VII. That if a lecturer ſhould dye, or otherwise be incapable of finishing his course of lectures, the rector of St. *Mary Le Bow* for the time being shall himself supply the deficient lectures, till a new election shall be made at the next usual time of proceeding to such election, and till the person then elected shall proceed upon his course of lectures.

At a vestry held the 16th of June 1778, the Reverend *East Apthorp*, D. D. was duly elected to preach the first course of lectures on the Catechsim of the Church of England, on Confirmation, and the Evidence of the Christian Religion.

THE END.

Lately published by the same AUTHOR.

I. A SERMON on the GENERAL FAST, Dec. 13, 1777, for the Pardon of Sins, averting Judgments, imploring Victory and perpetuating Peace to the BRITISH EMPIRE. Printed for J. Robson, and E. and C. Dilly. Price 1s.

II. LETTERS on the Prevalence of Christianity before its Civil Establishment; with Observations on a late History of the Decline of the Roman Empire. Price 5s.